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Gen. John de Chastelain, C.C., C.M.M., C.D., C.H.*



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Son Excellence le très honorable
David Johnston, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.
Gouverneur général du Canada

porte-parole nationale

Col. Chris Hadfield, O.C., O.Ont. C.S.M., C.D.

conseillers honoraires

*La très hon. Hon. Beverley McLachlin, C.P.
L'hon. John Fraser, C.P., O.C., O.B.C., C.D., c.r.
L'hon. Peter Milliken, C.P., O.C.
L'hon. Bill Blaikie, C.P.
L'hon. Perrin Beatty, C.P.
L'hon. Bill Graham, C.P., c.r.
Le Gén. John de Chastelain, C.C., C.M.M., C.D., C.H.*

2 June 2017

Dear friends of Hill 70,

Well! A few things have happened since the last newsletter!! Here is a summary:



Construction!

We only had enough funds in phase one to do the parking lot, washrooms, main entry walk, amphitheatre and of course the Obelisk. But fundraising continues apace. Every new penny we raise now will go towards another planned component. There are requirements for more walkways, more benches, and plazas. We have given the contractor the go-ahead to have the Information Kiosk in place for August and he may be able to source all the materials in time for our opening.

Warren and his team are nearing completion of the story boards which will be manufactured here then flown over and installed in time for the Opening. Some will be free-standing around the site and some will be mounted in the information Kiosk.

HILL 70
15-22 AUGUST 1917

CURRIE'S PLAN:
Rather than attack Lens directly, Currie instructed his Canadian Corps to plan to assault Hill 70 itself, capture it, and then provoke the Germans into counter-attacking to try and re-take the hill.

“If we are to fight at all, let us fight for something worth having.”
- Sir Arthur Currie's argument to attack Hill 70

THE CANADIAN PLAN
to seize Hill 70

1917: The War on a Knife's Edge
1917 marked the lowest point of the Great War. Russia was defeated and in revolution, and the brave armies of France were exhausted from terrible fighting at Verdun. The Americans had joined the Allies, but when President Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany, the U.S. Army was smaller than the Canadian Army, and it would take time to build up. There were real fears of a German victory.

Passchendaele
General Douglas Haig had ordered his British forces to begin a major offensive against the Germans at Passchendaele in Belgium in July 1917. He wanted German reinforcements diverted and held down away from Passchendaele, and called upon one of his best formations, Arthur Currie's Canadian Corps, to mount such an attack in Nord-Pas-de-Calais against Lens.

Battle of Loos
Lens and Loos-en-Gohelle were previously attacked by the British in 1915. They were defeated, and suffered 60,000 casualties at the hands of the German invaders, who held the fortified slopes of Hill 70 just north of Loos.

THE OTHER CANADIAN LEADERS

Major-General Sir David Watson,
General Officer Commanding
4th Canadian Division
Watson was a senior officer in the Canadian militia, who commanded the 4th Canadian Division throughout the First World War.

Major-General Sir Henry E. Burstall,
General Officer Commanding
2nd Canadian Division
Burstall was a Quebec-born artilleryman, Royal Military College of Canada cadet, and a British staff college graduate who commanded 2nd Canadian Division at Hill 70.

Major-General Louis J. Lipsett,
General Officer Commanding
3rd Division
Lipsett was the last British imperial officer to ever command a Canadian division in any war, and commanded 3rd Canadian Division at Hill 70.

Major-General Sir Archibald C. MacDonnell, General Officer Commanding 1st Canadian Division
Nicknamed "Barty Mac" by his troops for his reckless personal courage and swearing, MacDonnell had served in the South African War, and took over Arthur Currie's 1st Canadian Division before Hill 70.

In March the contractor completed the main elements of the monument. The parking lot, the amphitheatre, the entry gates and the principle walkway where all done just in time for he dedication ceremony. The obelisk is up, and I must confess that when seeing it for the first time many of us were astounded at its visual impact. Having seen computer-generated graphics of the planned obelisk, we were not prepared for just how impressive the monument is in real life. Many of us were speechless. I do recommend you go see for yourself!



Media and Education. One of our charter aims is to ensure that Canadians are aware of the Battle of Hill 70, Canada's Forgotten Victory. This has now been achieved, and steps are being taken to ensure that awareness continues to grow. Radio Canada International ran a very complementary story. All these will be available in the near future through links from our website: www.hill70.ca.

There have been articles in The National Post, The Whig Standard, the Times Colonist, The Ottawa Citizen and many more. One very significant event was when Philip Crawley, the publisher of the Globe and Mail agreed to become our print media partner. Since then a senior correspondent, Roy MacGregor was assigned to create a feature article which was given a full page on Remembrance Day. Even more impressive was a complete series on Hill 70 that he wrote, which were published in the week leading up to our April dedication ceremony (see below). In case you missed them, here are the links to the articles:

1. / <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/battle-of-hill-70-first-world-war/article34515164/>
2. / <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/vimy-ridge-hill-70-canada-soldiers-first-world-war-smiths-falls-high-school-students/article34515211/>
3. / <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/hill-70s-hero-parliament-hills-janitor-filipkonowals-journey-from-heroism-to-hardtimes/article34577719/>
4. / <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/a-century-on-letters-from-the-western-frontbring-grim-realities-of-war-and-waiting-home/article34634936/>
5. / <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/hill-70-vimy-ridge-first-world-war-readerstories/article34560956/>
6. / <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-longest-moment-of-silence-as-memorial-forcanadians-sacrifice-at-hill-70-unveiled-in-france/article34643015/>

The Hill 70 Memorial, PO Box 73 Kingston Main, Kingston, ON K7L 4V6, (613) 546 4567, www.hill70.ca

Capturing Hill 70: At the moment, our latest book, Capturing Hill 70, written by nine of Canada's foremost historians has some great statistics on Amazon and it is very close to achieving best-seller status, and CANEX has agreed to carry them.

Education. The exceptionally designed student learning kits have are now complete and over 3600 English and French versions have been mailed to secondary schools across Canada. Many schools are asking for second copies. As well as the kits, our project has supported teacher battle field tours through the Gregg Centre at the University of New Brunswick both last year and this coming summer of 2017. These are extremely worthwhile tours, as the teachers on their return to the classroom bring personal experiences to the study of the history of the Great War; greatly increasing student interest in the study of WWI. We plan to do so again in 2018.

Museums. There have been twelve uses of portable museum display to date, and many more are scheduled well into 100th anniversary year, the Billy Bishop Museum in Owen Sound being one for this summer. One of the museum displays was given outright to the Hill 70 Museum at Loos-en Gohelle. The curator and the city administrator were delighted. We encourage all visitors to the monument to leave time to view their exhibition on the second floor of the Salle Omer Caron Community Hall at Loos. 62750 Loos-en-Gohelle.

Dedication Event. On 8 April 2017, our Patron, the Governor General, officially dedicated the Hill 70 Memorial site. This effectively got the media to publicise the new monument. There was a team of Hill 70 folks (ably led by Tony Slack) who ensured this event came off without a hitch. We also got superb advice and support from the Governor Generals Staff and the Canadian Embassy in Paris. The Governor General presided as our Vice-Regal patron over the opening, and he cut the red ribbon at the new entry gates.



The invocation was done by the Chaplain General, BGen de Chapdelaine. The Chief of Defence Staff laid a wreath on behalf of the Canadian Corps, and the Minister of Defence spoke on behalf of the Federal Government and his old regiment, the British Columbia Regiment that claims two of the VCs awarded at Hill 70. The guard of honour was provided by the Canadian Joint Operations (CJOC) and we were very fortunate to have the band of the Royal 2nd Regiment whose exceptional music made the event complete. Overhead flew formations of first world war vintage biplanes from Canada and Luxemburg. (The Vimy flight are soon to fly cross country to commemorate Canada's sesquicentennial.)

Media coverage of the dedication was brilliant. Global news ran a great item, and CTV was not to be outdone and did a 2-minute segment on the battle and dedication. French media was out in force and coverage by La Voix du Nord and Tele-Gohelle was most complete. Here are the links to these reports:

Global TV National News Segment on Hill 70 Dedication Ceremony / Jeff Semple:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUNcwJf4MRc>

CTV National News Segment on Hill 70 Dedication Ceremony / Todd Battis:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NMXOBaQk48>

French Television / Tele Gohelle: <https://youtu.be/0MnnU01wap0>

E. Radio Canada International:

<http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2017/04/03/update-hill-70-outstanding-canadian-victory-forgotten-no-longer/>



The Guard of Honour was composed of soldiers, sailors, and airmen representing the units present one hundred years before at the Battle of Hill 70. Two squadrons of the Royal Flying Corps and one squadron of the Naval Air Service were staffed with many Canadians, and flying ace Billy Bishop won his 46th and 47th kills over Hill 70.

On the following day, many of our team attended the 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge Battle. Here is a photo of the Deputy Minister of Veterans affairs, General Walt Natynczyk, discussing the event with two of the Hill 70 team, Sir Cyril Woods and Sylvia Green.



Opening ceremonies. On 22 Aug 17 the Hill 70 Battle's 100th Anniversary activities will occur in Loos en Gohelle. Canadian Forces personnel who may be in Europe on other commemorative activities at that time have been welcomed to participate. The Army Commander will preside at this event. We plan to welcome all the citizens of Loos en Gohelle to their new memorial park and once again, we are getting exceptional cooperation from the Canadian Embassy Staff from Paris, particularly Tristan Landry.

On 23 August, there is an event planned in the Cemetery adjoining our Memorial to re-inter the remains of several Canadian Soldiers whose bodies have only now been re-discovered 100 years after the battle. There will be a guard of honour, burial party and musicians from the Canadian Forces. We hope to invite the next of kin of those soldiers to our Grand opening the 22 August. Here is a link to a recent article on the soldier who will be re-interred:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/dnd-reginald-joseph-winfield-johnston-vendin-le-vieil-france-1.4104816>



We have a dedicated group of professionals in multiple fields (law, architecture, education, construction, project management, fund-raising, media, etc.) who have been working nearly full time for three years to help bring this project to fruition. And they are all working Pro Bono. It is a delight to see us so close to our goal. While much of the monument is complete, there is not yet sufficient funds to complete the second walkway. This is critical since it is the one which will permit wheelchairs access to the base of the obelisk. This is necessary to conform to French building codes for the disabled.

All the funds we have raised to date are from private citizens, though we have approached the federal Government there is no indication to date that they may be considering a contribution. Fund-raising is still therefore a major priority and I fly to Vancouver tomorrow to seek further support for the project.

Many thanks for your continuing support. We hope as many of you as possible will attend the grand opening in August. Attached to this email is the information bulletin with the details for 22 August. Please let us know if you intend to join us; we look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Mark Hutchings,
Chairman,
The Hill 70 Project